

Keys for Effective Small Groups

(Leaders Meeting information Sheet)

1. Determine the aim of the group

Goals must be specific, achievable and measurable. Long range goals spell out why the group is meeting, and its overall purpose. Short range goals are concerned with how and when the group moves towards its goals. Goals should be consistent with the overall nature and purpose of the wider Christian community.

During the first meeting of most types of groups, members should be given time to express their hopes and expectations of the group. Each writes answers to such questions as: "What are you hoping this group will achieve?" and "What do you expect of this group?" This can help to avoid future frustration and conflict for both them and the group.

All the activities will then be built around this aim. The goal areas for a group to consider include fellowship, worship, learning, prayer, sharing, service and outreach.

2. Limit the length of each meeting

Start punctually and finish on time. Regularity and punctuality are crucial for effective small groups. If a group is involved in an absorbing sharing or discussion period which looks like taking the group over time, the leader should seek a group decision regarding exceeding the scheduled time for finishing. Those who may have to leave should be able to do so.

3. Have a pattern for each meeting

There are certain elements which are common to most small groups in the Christian church: worship and praise, study on the bible or books of faith, sharing and insights, problems and questions, prayer of different kinds (both silent and spoken). See page 27 "Growing Christians in Small Groups" for a possible model for a 2 hour meeting schedule.

4. Make a covenant with each other

In order to do this the group needs to answer the question; "What is the purpose of the group?"

The covenant could be: to be affirming, to be available, to be open, sensitive, honest, or confidential. One such covenant, the Serendipity relational Bible Study resources covenant embraces the following aspects:

- Attendance – regular attendance a priority
- Participation – openness to share your story
- Confidentiality
- Accountability – share new goals and be held accountable
- Accessibility – willingness to help others in your group
- Evangelism – willingness to adopt new people in your group

5. Serve as a group

6. Hold regular leader's meetings

7. Evaluate regularly

Purpose – did we achieve our purpose?

Content – what did we learn?

Group Process – how well did we work together?

Personal Growth – what happened to us as individuals?

8. Be loyal to your local church

9. Plan some leisure events